

# Highway Safety Program in Indiana

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper reviews the initial impact of the Highway Safety Act of 1966 on the State of Indiana. The paper provides a general overview of the current status of the programs enumerated under this act and sketches the administrative framework adopted by the State of Indiana to handle the new programs. Secondly, and probably most importantly, it reviews the financial status of the program as can best be determined at this time.

The Indiana General Assembly, in response to the ambitious federal program for traffic safety enacted by Congress, passed enabling legislation permitting Indiana to participate.

## INDIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED

Governor Branigin, pursuant to the General Assembly's action, requested the State Budget Agency to create positions for personnel to coordinate the initial planning phases of this operation. The organization chart, Fig. 1, shows the current assignment of responsibilities. In addition to the administrative personnel, the Assembly created a City-County Traffic Safety Programs Advisory Board. This board has the responsibility to aid in the determination of standards for acceptable local traffic safety programs under the highway safety act. Members of this board are appointed from nominations made by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Indiana Association of Counties, and the Indiana Sheriffs' Association among others.

### *Key Man*

However, the deputy director of Program Development for Political Subdivisions is the key person. Governor Branigin assigned this important task to Floyd Kline, Sr., who is also the director of the Indiana Office of Traffic Safety. It is through Kline's leadership that

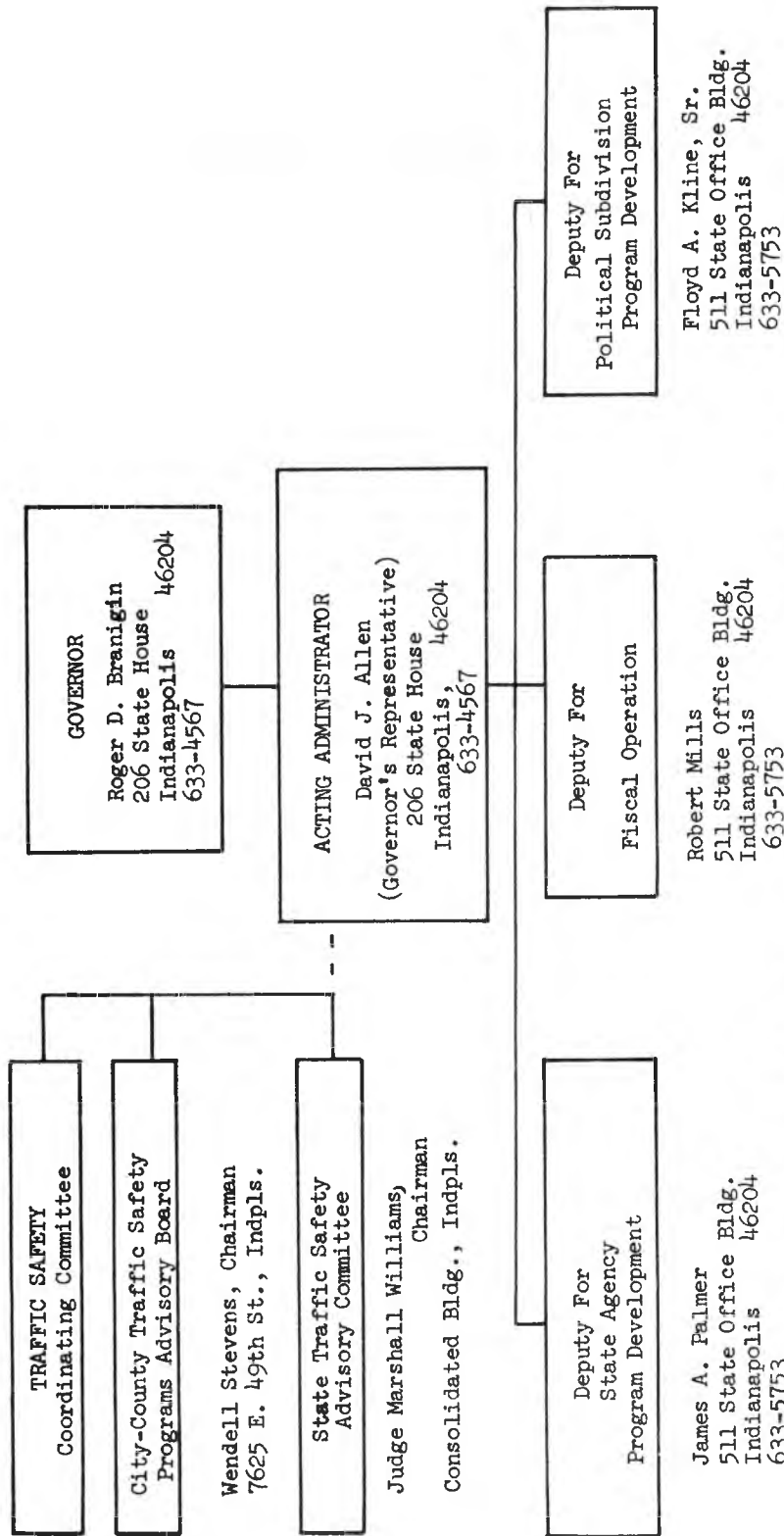


Fig. 1. Indiana State organizational chart for the federal highway safety program. The implementation of the Highway Safety Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-564) was provided for by chapter 134, Acts of 1967 (Burns 47-3021 through 47-3031).

the development of a meaningful traffic safety program for local communities and counties can become a reality. This program, as required by the federal legislation, must be in concert with the goals of the state's comprehensive traffic safety program. Every state, no later than December 31, 1968, must have a comprehensive traffic safety program that is approved by the Secretary of Transportation or be subject to a possible ten percent cutback in funds available for highway construction purposes in the state.

## LOCAL PROJECTS MUST FIT INTO STATE PLAN

Each state, under the apportionment formula contained in the statute, is to allocate at least 40 percent of the federal monies for expenditure by its political subdivisions, provided there are sufficiently meritorious local projects available that will fit into the comprehensive state traffic safety plan. In order that acceptable programs be developed, every political subdivision should include in its considerations, when determining how best to participate, the following points:

- (1) Is the particular project in concert with the total state program and will it be a component of the program?
- (2) Does the project provide for significant progress toward the national standards?
- (3) Does the project have a value as a pilot project for another subdivision?
- (4) Does the project have particular merit when a review of the traffic safety pattern and accident experience of the locality is considered?

The state officials must consider, in addition to the above possibilities, such items as:

- (1) Is the project of sufficient size to make a meaningful contribution to the traffic safety program?
- (2) Is the project within the existing or anticipated capabilities of the subdivision?
- (3) Is it of the type eligible for funding under the Highway Safety Act or would it fit better under some other federal or state funding system?

Admittedly, each of the questions is general in nature. It is meant to be so. The Department of Transportation, through the National Highway Safety Bureau, has issued 13 standards and is considering at least two others for final promulgation at this time. The safety programs must fit within these standards.

## PROJECT POSSIBILITIES

This raises the question as to what types of projects are the most likely to be considered in planning highway safety programs. It is a most legitimate question and deserves more than a passing comment.

The federal legislation lists, and the standards re-emphasize, several specific points which merit consideration:

- (1) Effective accident record system;
- (2) Thorough accident investigations to determine probable causes of
  - (a) the accident,
  - (b) the injuries,
  - (c) the deaths;
- (3) Highway design and maintenance including such things as lighting, markings, and surface treatment;
- (4) Surveillance of traffic for detection and correction of high or potentially high accident locations;
- (5) Comprehensive driver training programs;
- (6) Emergency medical services programs. And there are others.

It is my hope that the local units of government—county, city, and town—will be encouraged to contact Kline and to discuss the project possibilities with him.

## INDIANA PROJECTS SUBMITTED

The State of Indiana has already taken the initial steps to strengthen its traffic safety program through the submission of several projects to the National Highway Safety Bureau. Several of these will require close cooperation between state agencies and their partners on the county and local level.

### *Pinpoint Accident Locations*

A "grid" system to pinpoint accident locations and thereby make available more detailed information on the contributing factors to the accident has been developed and forwarded to the National Highway Safety Bureau for approval. This system, through the cooperation of the highway department, state police, and bureau of motor vehicles can well serve as a model for state-local cooperation. Kline will be in charge of the training program. He will be in contact with the county and community officials for assistance when project approval comes through. This uniformity in approach will help lessen the variables and give Indiana the opportunity to develop an accident reporting system second to none. Cooperation is the key to its success.

### *Emergency Medical Services*

A comprehensive review of the available emergency medical services in the State of Indiana is also awaiting federal approval. This project, under the direction of officials within the board of health, will also help the local communities determine the current status—and the needs—of emergency medical care for accident victims.

### *Additional Projects*

Projects dealing with the “range” concept of driver education, the initial implementation of the vehicle inspection program for Indiana, and the development of a VASCAR traffic surveillance project for use on US 41 from the Illinois line in Lake County to the Kentucky line in Vanderburgh County, as well as assistance in the training of state police recruits are also in various stages of preparation, budget agency review, and submission to the National Highway Safety Bureau.

The state agencies which deal daily with traffic safety problems and programs are attempting to develop, with the help of the local units of government and public support groups, projects that will be of lasting benefit to all our citizens.

### *Intergovernmental Cooperation Needed*

The key to improved traffic safety programming is intergovernmental cooperation. The basis for the program in Indiana is to cultivate this cooperation and to realistically appraise our future needs and requirements. In order to properly do this, it is necessary to comment, in some detail, on the fiscal background of the Highway Safety Act of 1966.

## FUNDING

The initial funding authorization, approved in the 1966 act, was for \$267 million. This total was broken down into \$67 million for fiscal year 1967, \$100 million for fiscal year 1968, and \$100 million for fiscal year 1969. The act also contains a contract authorization provision similar to that employed in the distribution of federal aid to highway planning and construction funds. This provision permits the apportionment and obligation of the money authorized prior to the passage of the necessary appropriation bills by the Congress.

The initial funding authorization was cut approximately 75 percent when the appropriations bill was finally passed. The effect was to reduce the money available to each state on its apportionment. Indiana, under the original authorization, was to receive approximately \$2.9

million as its apportionment through fiscal year 1968. The cutback in the actual appropriation by the Congress reduced the monies available to the State of Indiana to about \$595 thousand. The National Highway Safety Bureau officials inform us that the original apportionment will still be funded and that we should go along preparing state and local projects in line with the \$2.9 million. However, the current fiscal situation being as it is, we have decided to work within the actual available cash total for Indiana until a more definite plan is forthcoming.

The President has requested the authorization of \$50 million for fiscal year 1970. This, together with the unobligated balance, is deemed to be sufficient to assure continued funding of state and community programs. It remains to be seen what the Congress will actually appropriate for highway safety.

Under the limitation of the amounts available, all projects will be carefully evaluated prior to submission to the Department of Transportation. Moreover, each must remember that the matching 50 percent of the project will have to come from local revenue sources. The types of programs available and eligible can be determined through discussions with Kline, Palmer, and Mills. You are urged to discuss this financial arrangement with these men.

From this short fiscal review, it is obvious that the "blush" is off the rose" on federal funding for highway safety programs. The Department of Transportation officials feel that continued activity by the states and communities will be of great assistance in developing public support and demand for the full appropriation as originally authorized by the Congress in 1966.

### *Why Less Money?*

Several of the reasons listed for appropriating less than the requested funding bear careful analysis by state and local officials. The Congress evidently felt that the highway safety bureau was not yet sufficiently staffed or prepared to handle the full authorization. The recent spurt of activity by the states and communities in the preparation of traffic safety programs evidences that this belief is no longer a valid one. Secondly, very few states and localities took the initiative to urge the Congress to enact the appropriations initially requested. Governor Branigin contacted each member of the Senate and House appropriations committee and urged the inclusion in the bill of sufficient funds to assist the states in carrying out the mandate the Congress had given them in the Highway Safety Act.

*Ten-Year Expenditure Needs*

The states and communities are the ultimate beneficiaries of this program. If the Congress does not have before it sufficient data to determine the national needs for highway safety programming, it is our responsibility, through the Department of Transportation, to provide such documentation. The states have been requested to submit ten-year projections on safety expenditures under each of the known standards and the proposed standards still in process of final promulgation. Indiana has provided this information and I hope our sister states have similarly complied with the request.

**CONCLUSION**

What was credited as a new approach for creative federalism upon its birth in 1966 may become a stillborn program if each of us who have a task to perform in safety do not lend our efforts to those of the public support groups and the safety officials within the Department of Transportation. This ambitious program, just in its infancy, needs the firm guidance of responsible citizens and officials. I feel that we in Indiana are making every effort to strengthen the traffic safety program for the benefit of all our citizens and our visitors who travel on our streets, roads, and highways.

The ever increasing loss of life and damage to property are stark evidence that we cannot do less—we must do more. I urge your cooperation and that of your associates at the county and community level in this important undertaking. I pledge the staff support of the state agencies in aiding your program development.